

persons imprisoned for intemperance sign themselves Catholics than are warranted by the proportion of Catholics to our total population. The 'proof' is a bit of preposterous folly. We have dealt with it from time to time. Here we will content ourselves with the following summary remarks in point:—

The Bishop's critics assume that a proper and correct record is kept of the religious beliefs of all the 'drunks' in the country. This is undue assumption with a vengeance. (a) In the first place, the roll of Dominion drunkards is far from complete. (b) In the second place, all convicted toppers are not required to make a statement of their religious beliefs, but only those that are sent to prison. And (c) it is, we believe, the experience of every priest who has been engaged in prison work in these countries—as we were for a time in three separate places—that many non-Catholic criminals have the habit of giving themselves Irish 'aliases' and falsely designating themselves as Catholic. As for the rest, a very large percentage of them can lay claim to the name of Catholic solely by the fact of their Baptism. They live defiant to the laws of the Church; they assume a sham Catholicism when they find themselves within prison walls, only to shed it at the moment that they sniff again the air of freedom; and, so far as their lives go, their proper designation is not Catholics, but practical pagans. Is it not high time for sane people to abandon the controversial trick of making the Catholic Church, and her alone, responsible for the sins and follies of those who never acknowledged her authority, or who, having once acknowledged it, decline her guidance, reject her ministrations, and snap defiant fingers at her laws? One might pardon such crude fallacies in immature youths and callow fledgelings that air at times their omniscient lack of knowledge in the correspondence columns of the daily press; but one is entitled to better things than the adoption or confirmation of such offences against right reason and Christian charity from men who have reached the age of sober thinking and responsible expression.

But our prison statistics furnish no reliable evidence even as to the number of 'drunks' or other offenders for which the Dominion, or any given religious denomination in it, is responsible. (1) Over the published tables of 'law and crime' it is expressly stated that 'each offence is reckoned as a distinct person.' Thus, if John O'Doe is 'run in' seven times in one year for over-indulgence in drink, he counts in the statistics as seven separate misdemeanants. (2) Again: great numbers of drunkards and others convicted in our magistrates' courts do not figure in our prison reports because their means allow them to pay fines in cases where the poorer offender has to go into durance vile. Thus, in 1901, out of 20,624 summarily convicted, no fewer than 10,088 were merely fined, and 1926 were ordered to prison as an alternative to paying a fine or finding security for good behavior. The systematic impoverishment of Irish Catholics by the operation of the penal code and the agrarian laws is responsible for the fact that they furnish an undue proportion to the poorer and poorest part of the population in these countries. And this circumstance would naturally account for a greater frequency of appearance, on their part, on the pages of our prison records. Mulhall, MacDonnell, and statisticians generally acknowledge that petty larceny, drunkenness, and certain allied offences are the outcome of poverty. And the overstrung temperament and relative neediness of a great mass of our Catholic poor greatly tend to bring their offenders prominently into the public eye. They drink, for instance, in the open, under the eye of the police, and, in their case, an arrest may be associated with three or four separate charges. People of more phlegmatic temperament or fuller purse get drunk, but their offence is unknown to the police records. Probably not two per cent. of our country's total cases of drunkenness figure before our courts. Our statistics of 'law and crime' contain no evidence that drunkenness or other offences arising from poverty are proportionately more numerous among New Zealand Catholics than among persons of the same class that are adherents of other religious denominations. And we are convinced that in the graver offences that constitute 'criminals'—in murder, suicide, rape, indecent assault, burglary, swindling, infanticide, pre-natal murder,

juvenile depravity, flagrant conjugal infidelity, and in other grave infractions of the moral laws of which God takes note where the policeman and the statistician often fail—the Catholics of New Zealand would gladly take their chances as against those of all other sections of the community.

Notes

The Catholic Paper

There has been, perhaps, no time in living memory when the nations have had greater need than at present to keep the sword keen, the look-out sharp, and the defences ready. The same remark applies to the warfare of the Faith against error and vice. And in the first line of defence stands the Catholic paper. 'It is,' said Bishop Conaty of Los Angeles in a recent discourse, 'a strong champion of truth. It is out in the open, fighting in the interest of truth. It comes into the home with its explanation of Catholic doctrine and its defence of Catholic truth and Catholic interests. Every Catholic family should have a Catholic newspaper. While the preacher and the lecturer speak the strong words, what they say passes, but the printed word remains, and the message of truth which it conveys is available to inquiring minds long after the memory of the spoken word has passed away.'

France furnishes a warning example of the dangers of a divided and poorly supported Catholic newspaper press. Its scores of weekly weaklings* (entitled *Semaines Religieuses*) contrived to maintain an anæmic, debilitated, powerless, and apologetic existence at the expense of the few ably conducted journals that, like the *Univers*, were calculated to mould public thought, to unite the scattered Catholic forces, and to present a solid front to the enemy.

An Index of Forbidden Books

Some of our magistrates (as our columns have lately shown) are evidently in favor of some such check upon the publication of 'penny dreadfuls' and other forms of unwholesome fiction as is exercised by a high State official of England in the censorship of plays. In this connection we may appropriately quote an extract from a sermon that was preached by Dr. Campbell Morgan, of Westminster Chapel, towards the close of 1904. 'We smile,' said he, 'in our broad-minded way, at the Roman Catholic index of forbidden books. I often wish I could make an index of forbidden books for our young people.'

A Rebuke

We recall the case of a sarcastic priest who, in the middle of his sermon, addressed the following rebuke to the members of the choir in an Australian city: 'I fear that my words are interrupting the thread of an absorbing narrative among the members of the choir. I will therefore pause in order to enable them to conclude in peace.' The conclusion was, as may be imagined, a rather abrupt one. The *S.H. Review* quotes in a recent issue an even more telling admonition. Said a preacher: 'I am always afraid to expose those who misbehave, for this reason: Some years ago, as I was preaching, a young man who sat before me was laughing, talking, and making uncouth grimaces. I paused and administered a severe rebuke. After the service a gentleman said to me: "Sir, you have made a great mistake. That young man whom you reproved is an idiot." Since then I have been afraid to reprove those who misbehave themselves in church, lest I should repeat the mistake and reprove another idiot.' During the rest of the service at least there was good order.

Farmers and others desirous of securing a cheap and effective water supply for farm and domestic purposes should write to, or call on, Mr. Thomas Danks, Lichfield street, Christchurch, for particulars of his Titan Windmill, which will be found to do all that is claimed for it....

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